

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1718

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAS/SOPN, CH, US, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS

SUBJ: INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SPECULATE ON NEGATIVE RESULTS
OF VANCE TRIP

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN AUGUST 11 CONVERSATION WITH LOCAL REUTER
CORRESPONDENTS CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
OFFICIALS SARCASTICALLY DOWNPLAYED CHANGES FOR PROGRESS
DURING SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT. END SUMMARY

2. REUTER CORRESPONDENT (ROGERS -- PLEASE PROTECT) HAS ADVISED
USLO OFFICER OF LONG AND CANDID CONVERSATION ON AUGUST 11
WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
FOREIGN PRESS LIAISON DIVISION DIRECTOR MA YU-CHEN AND
OFFICIAL CHI MING-TSUNG. DESPITE OBVIOUS NEWSWORTHINESS
OF MA'S AND CHI'S REMARKS ON PROSPECTS FOR VANCE VISIT,
REUTERS IS HOLDING THE STORY FOR THE TIME BEING. DETAILS FOLLOW.

3. MA AND CHI, BOTH SOPHISTICATED VETERANS IN THE INFORMATION
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DEPARTMENT, UNCHARACTERISTICALLY ADOPTED SARCASTIC TONE IN
COMMENTS ON FORTHCOMING VISIT BY SECRETARY, ON
"KMT INFLUENCE" IN AMERICAN PRESS CIRCLES, ON PRESIDENT
CARTER'S ALLEGED LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
AND ON BELIEF BY AMERICANS THAT THEY CONSTITUTE "THE CENTER
OF THE UNIVERSE".

4. MA SINGLED OUT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR FOR SPECIAL VITUPERATION OWING TO ITS RECENT PUBLICATION OF 12-PAGE SUPPLEMENT ON TAIWAN. THIS, MA ALLOWED, WAS BUT ONE EXAMPLE OF THE MAINFEST "KMT (I.E., TAIWAN) INFLUENCE" IN AMERICAN PRESS CIRCLES.

5. MUSING THAT "EVEN PRESIDENT TRUMAN HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT TAIWAN WAS A PART OF CHINA", MA ASKED RHETORICALLY WHY THE CURRENT AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS SAME REALITY. IN APPARENT REPLY TO HIS OWN QUESTION, MA SNIDELY CASTIGATED AMERICANS FOR BELIEVING THAT THEY ARE "THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE" AND CRITICIZED PRESIDENT CARTER'S ALLEGED INEXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CITING THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS ONE EXAMPLE.

6. MA CONCLUDED BY ASKING THE REUTER CORRESPONDENTS IF THEY EXPECTED ANY REAL PROGRESS DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT. WHEN THEY REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE, MA SIGNALLED BY GESTURE AND FACIAL EXPRESSION THAT HE WAS IN TOTAL AGREEMENT.

7. REUTER CORRESPONDENT ASKED MA TO RECONCILE HIS EVIDENT NEGATIVISM WITH RECENT RASH OF FAVORABLE REPORTING ON SECRETARY'S VISIT BY PRO-PRC AND PRC-CONTROLLED PRESS IN HONG KONG. MA DISMISSED THIS REPORTING -- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE TIME MAGAZINE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT CARTER -- WITH A DISDAINFUL QUESTION: "DID YOU SEE ANYTHING CONFIDENTIAL

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IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS OR IN THE AMERICAN POSITION?"

8. MA CONFIRMED THAT LI HSIEN-NIEN'S JULY 4 REMARKS TO ADMIRAL (RET) ZUMWALT REMAIN THE OFFICIAL PRC STANCE ON THE TAIWAN QUESTION. YEH CHIEN-YING'S JULY 31 ARMY DAY COMMENTS ON TAIWAN WERE CALCULATED TO REITERATE THAT STANCE, MA SAID.
WOODCOCK

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